TAFT TALK

No. 54 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Jun 2008

Emery and Julia Etta (Hovey) Taft , photocopy of a charcoal and chalk drawing made circa 1890s (based on the clothing). The original drawing was given to Norma Winters by her Aunt Mildred (Kleinow) Zazula

Emery and Julia Etta (Hovey) Taft

Recently Norma Winters sent us this wonderful image of her gt-gt-grandparents along with a very interesting story. It's always a pleasure to receive family information to share and especially when someone is careful to detail who, what, when and where – which Norma has done quite nicely.

Norma (Kleinow) Winters is the daughter of Clarence Kleinow, granddaughter of Luella Hadden, gt-granddaughter of Hannah Adell Taft, and gt-gt-granddaughter of Emery (Adon, Caleb, Caleb,Daniel, Robert) Taft.

See Emery Taft p 3

We can help Mr. Know-It-All

A recent query to "Mr. Know-It-All"(aka Bob Tremblay) in the local paper for Uxbridge, MA asked if Earl D. Taft "whom the elementary school in Uxbridge is named after, was a relative of President William Howard Taft?"

The response was "probably yes… Wait you probably want some more information, don't you?

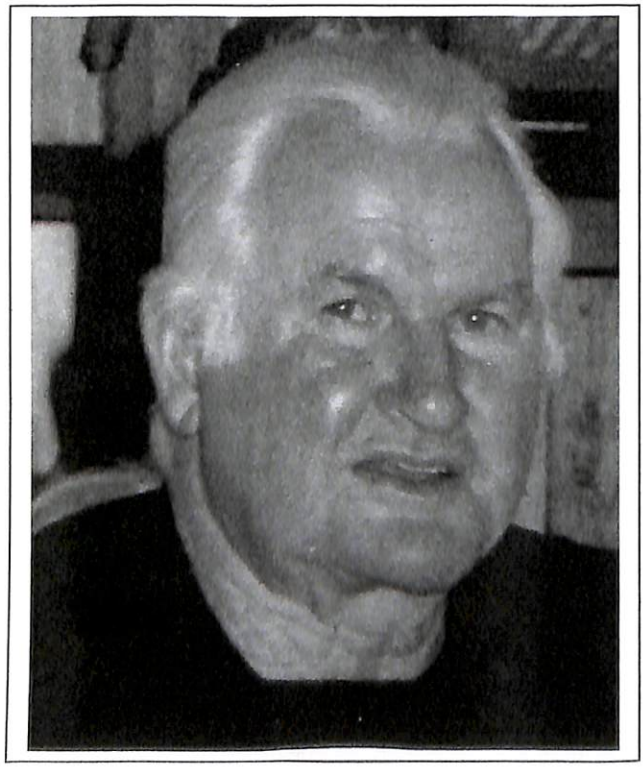
"First a little background on Earl D. Taft. He was a public school teacher in Uxbridge and the first supervisor of elementary school education in Uxbridge according to Kim Hill, secretary to the principal at the Earl D. Taft Elementary School.

"He was also principal of the junior high school in Uxbridge and served in World War II, according to J. Francis Cove, III, chairman of the Uxbridge Historical Commission. Mr. Taft was also a member of the Taft family dynasty, Cove adds. His exact relation to William Howard Taft could not be determined."

The lengthy article continues on with a great deal of information on President Taft.

For our members information The Earl D. Taft School is a public elementary school serving grades Pre-K to 4 and has over 900 students, with a student / teacher ratio of 12/1. They are known as the Spartans.

We know that Earl D. Taft was the son of Frederick Cyrus and Mary E. (Davison) Taft and was born in 1906 in Massachusetts. At this point our files do not show his birth, marriage, or death information, but we will keep searching. Frederick Cyrus was the son of Samuel Harkness (Thomas, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas, Robert) Taft. Thus while a member of the "Taft Dynasty" and being a "cousin" of President Taft in its broad sense, he is not closely related to the president.



In Memoriam

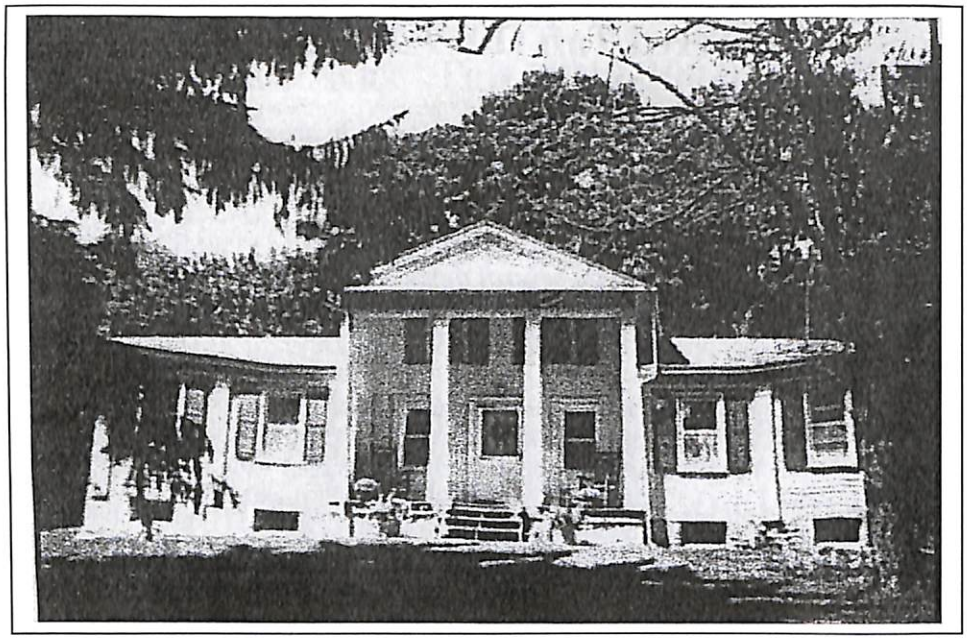
Stanley Keith Norris

One of our Australian cousins, Stanley Keith Norris, succumbed to an infection 3 Jan 2008 after a brave battle. He was born 25 Feb 1932 and was well loved.

He leaves his widow, Janice, and several children, grandchildren and gt-grandchildren.

Our deepest sympathies go to the Norris family.

Stanley was the son of Frederick Thomas and Vera Gertrude (Mantova) Norris and grandson of Mary Georgina (Solomon, Cruff, Silas, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.



The Taft Homestead, built in the 1840s at 60333 Jewell Rd, Washington, MI. This photo was in a real estate flyer in the 1950s when the house was up for sale. To quote Norma "obviously improvements were made over the years."

Emery Taft (continued from page 1)

The following newspaper article, dated approximately 1950 from Gaines, MI, was transcribed by Norma's cousin Norma Jean (Dungerow) Hoffman (daughter of Bertha Hadden):

"Taft Family Thinks Its Age Is Michigan Record"

"Andrew Taft of 882 S. Van Dyke Rd thinks his family holds some kind of a state record and would like to hear from challengers. He says 'my three brothers and four sisters and I are probably the largest family for our age in the state of Michigan.

"He is more than probably right. Mr. Taft's elder sister, Miss Mallie, the senior member of the family is past 90, he is past 88, his sister Mrs. Zala Tyrell is 86, his brothers Aden and Edwin are 85 and 84, Mrs Hannah Hadden is 80, Lewis is 78, and Miss Luella Mae is 74.

"And that isn't all. They all live within a stones' throw of each other and not one of the group has ever had an operation!

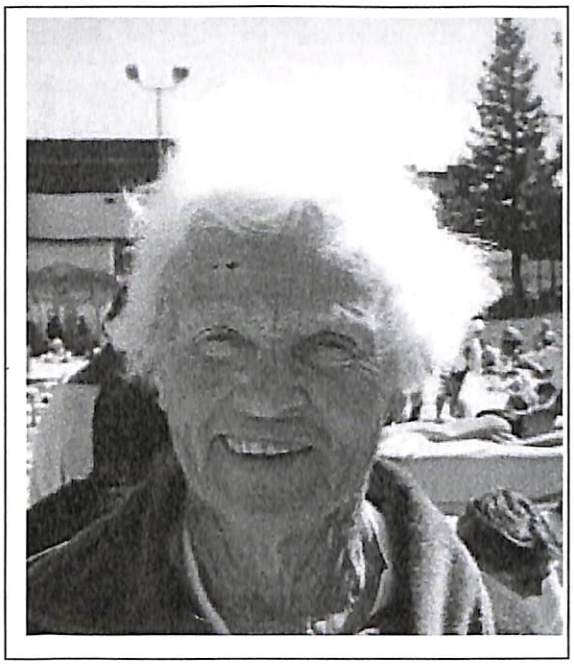
"They are the sons and daughters of Emery and Juliet Hovey Taft, both of whom were born in or near Romeo and are descendants of English emigrants (sic) to New York State. The senior Tafts homesteaded on a government grant of land 4-1/2 miles south of Romeo on Jewel Rd and the three unmarried members of their family, Misses Mallie and Luella Mae and Mr. Edwin, make their home there still. Mrs. Tyrell and Mrs. Hadden, both widows, live together in Rochester, Lewis Taft lives next door to Andrew on S. VanDyke and Aden, a widower, makes his home part of the time with the unmarried members on the home farm.

"Asked if he could think of any particular reason for the longevity and good health of his family Mr. Taft couldn't but admitted that one of his brothers has weak knees and that he himself fell on the ice four years ago and, while he didn't break any bones, was badly shaken up. He said that was the first time he could ever remember having had a doctor!

"He doesn't recall any home medications as a youngster but knows they were a lively family who did lots of work and whose staple diet was mainly fat pork, buckwheat cakes, bread made from stone ground wheat flour and lots of corn meal mush.

"In short the Tafts are stout people and this newspaper is inclined to back Mr. Andrew Taft's claim that they hold a state record."

It might interest our readers to know that Emery Taft (1836-1909) was aged 73 and Julia Etta (Hovey) Taft (1837-1916) was aged 79 when they deceased. The children of Emery and Julia Etta Taft included: Malvina Etta "Mallie" (1859-1963), Andrew H. (1861-1938 (sic)), Zala Zong (1863-1962), Aden M (1865-1956), Edburn Augustus (1867-1950), Hannah Adell (1870-1953), Lewis Emery (1872-1961) and Luella May (1875-1969).



Zada Weed Taft (1919-2002)

It all started with an unusual name and a husband and wife team – and ended up with two exceptional athletes, their sport, and their lives.

Zada Taft "first swam the Golden Gate in 1937 when the bridge was first built. She swam it several times and again in 1987 (the 50th anniversary). She was described as the Mother of Open Water Swim"according to her daughter: Lynne DeVictoria Taft.

Zada listed her achievements: "I swam 22 trips across the Golden Gate (one a year) and completed 12 Alcatraz swims. In 1976 we made our first Waikiki swim of approximately 2.5 miles and for 17 years I won my age group. When I was 65 I swam the Waikiki 7K (the oldest woman) in 3 hours and 31 minutes. Our first International meet was New Zealand (1984), followed by Japan (1986), Australia (1988), Rio (1990), Indianapolis (1992), Canada (1994), England (1996)." She had 147 individual wins, 2 long distance and 1 pool swim All-American Honors; All-Star Honors; 1 long distance honor; 1979 recipient Ransom J. Arthur Award.

"I'm not the fastest or the most graceful (swimmer) but I love it. (1987)"

During the depression Zada's family moved in with her grandparents in Alameda. Nearby was Neptune Beach, a "grand playgournd" with two pools, a roller coaster and other attractions. "'I asked my father for ten cents to get in. No, he couldn't afford it. The cashier at the attraction said that if I swam in the race on Sunday I could get in free. So I went down to the 'rocks' (the Bay) and taught myself to swim. I came in last (as I did for many years) but the coach at the Western Women's Club said she'd help me…' To finance the deal Zada's mother provided the fifty cent yearly fee and her father who worked for the Market Street Railway provided her with free tickets for the train and the ferry. In her Tuesday and Thursday crossings of the Bay she watched the building of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridge." Soon she had joined the Crystal Plunge where she and Ray met, both aged sixteen."

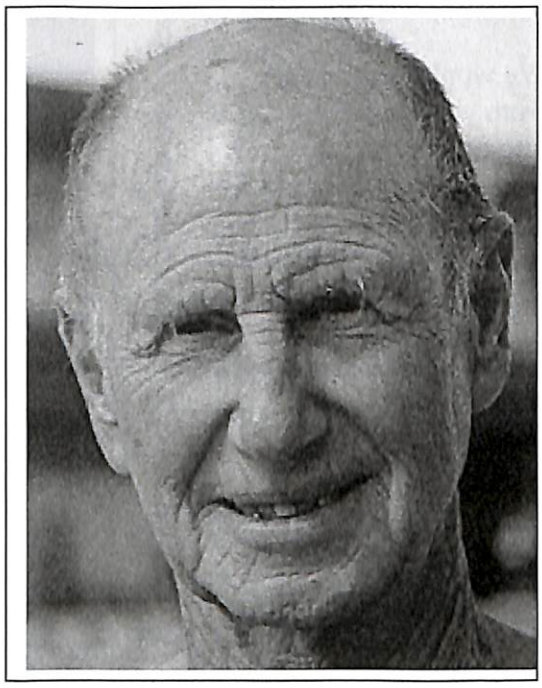
"Ray became a lifeguard and I was cashier, towel girl and cleaned up the women's room. One sunny afternoon I saw Ray walk to the shallow end of the pool. The roof was glass and as he walked the sunlight that shined on him lit him up. He was the most beautiful person I'd ever seen: broad shoulders, trim hips, tall and seemed suspended in the light.

"Three weeks later he asked me to go roller skating with him…. Weekends we met at the beach to surf or at Fleischaker to train. There was no dressing room for girls so I left my towel and sweats on the pier, swam around the cove and walked home."

In 1937 the Golden Gate Bridge opened and swimmers accompanied by rowboats began making the crossing. "A man at the Dolphin Club asked Zada if she would like to go rowing with him…'I asked the man rowing with me if he'd row over to the boat where the swimmers were starting the gun went off and so did I. It was an easy swim across, right tide.'" And again "According to the 25 Sep 1939 San Francisco Chronicle, "Gear Wins Swim, Uninvited Girl Star is Sixth... Jack Gear, husky young machinist, paddled his way to an easy win … yesterday, but it remained for an unofficial entry to steal the show. Zada Weed, blonde Crystal Plunge swimmer, barred by rules which prevent feminine stars from competing, sneaked into the water while the judges were looking the other way and proceeded to come home a nifty seventh, finishing in front of eighteen men contenders."

During World War II, married, Ray became a Surgical Technician in the Philippines and Zada a Journeyman welder. Inside a ship being built she broke another record in a seven hour shift making 3 passes to weld a vertical 40 feet in one night. The story of the rest of their lives is completely intertwined with each other and the success they earned was shared between them. See page 5 for more.

Raymond Frank "Ray" Taft (1919-2002)



And here is the other half of that amazing couple.

Ray Taft's career began when the swimming coach recruited him during a junior high school P.E. class in 1933. He joined the AAU swimming program at the Crystal Plunge in San Francisco. "In that era he recalls they swam in cold water without blocks, goggles, lane ropes or painted lane lines."

Masters Swimmer since 1973; 49 World Records: 65, 70, 75 year age groups; 28 World Championships: 1984, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1996; 28 National Championships; 63 National Records; 1978 recipient Ransom J. Arthur Award; Swimming Hall of Fame as an Honor Masters Swimmer in 1996. 28 gold, 4 silver and 2 bronze medals at the Masters World Championships of New Zealand (19840, Japan (1986), Brisbane (1988), Indianapolis (1992) and Montreal (1994). Since age 70 won 28 National Championships and set over 63 national records. Head coach of the San Mateo Masters Marlins.

"when it comes to swimming, Ray Taft has done it all"

Ray Taft was an athlete and a coach and opened his own swimming school, The Taft Swim School, in 1955 with his wife through funds obtained from the G.I. Bill. In order to start that school he and his family sold their house and moved in with Zada's parents into a one bath, two-bedroom home, working varied jobs to make ends meet until the school was well-established. In 1996 The Taft Swim School was enshrined in the Hall of Fame as the nation's longest-running family-run swim school.

Ray coached all levels both juvenile and adult age groups, water polo, and "aquacades" as well as becoming a catalyst in developing the Masters Swimming program. His swimming career spanned seven decades, through his childhood, teenage years and his entire adult life. He stated that during the service (which cut short his Olympic aspirations in 1940) "when we went overseas, I always looked for a place to swim even if it was jumping overboard in our transport or getting our convoys over to the South Seas."

"An extraordinary athlete, he shifted from specializing in one stroke and distance to the broader scope of being proficient in all strokes", the backstroke and individual medley continuing to be his forte. During the 1980s and 1990s Taft swam to "500 first places, 60 second places, and one fourth, in pool events. His 21 national and 10 world records in 1995 are just a sample of his superior talents. He is also a champion in open-water events in Hawaii and Northern California."

In 1990 he underwent quadruple bypass surgery and then proceeded in the next few years to surpass his previous records. In 1997 he stated "we still swim every stroke, every distance, open water and pools of any length – short and long course."

In a article for SWIM Magazine "the retired coach and swim school director explains why he keeps getting better with age: "I'm another year away from my (quadruple bypass) operation in 1990 so I've regained more strength. I've added some strengthening and flexibility training and I've focused on pacing. Now I can maintain a predetermined pace for any distance.... At least once a week we go out with a small group of fellow swimmers of all ages – the old Turks and the young studs. That's what makes it so much fun."

Raymond Frank Taft was the son of Roy Sylvenus (Anson Curtis, Sylvenus Adon, Adon, Caleb, Caleb, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

Sources for both articles: USMS website http://www.usms.org/hist/sto/?ID-3; SWIM Magazine (various issues). Photos Rick Windes

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, you name it, we are interested. And better yet how about writing an article for this newsletter – no financial reward but lots of good will!

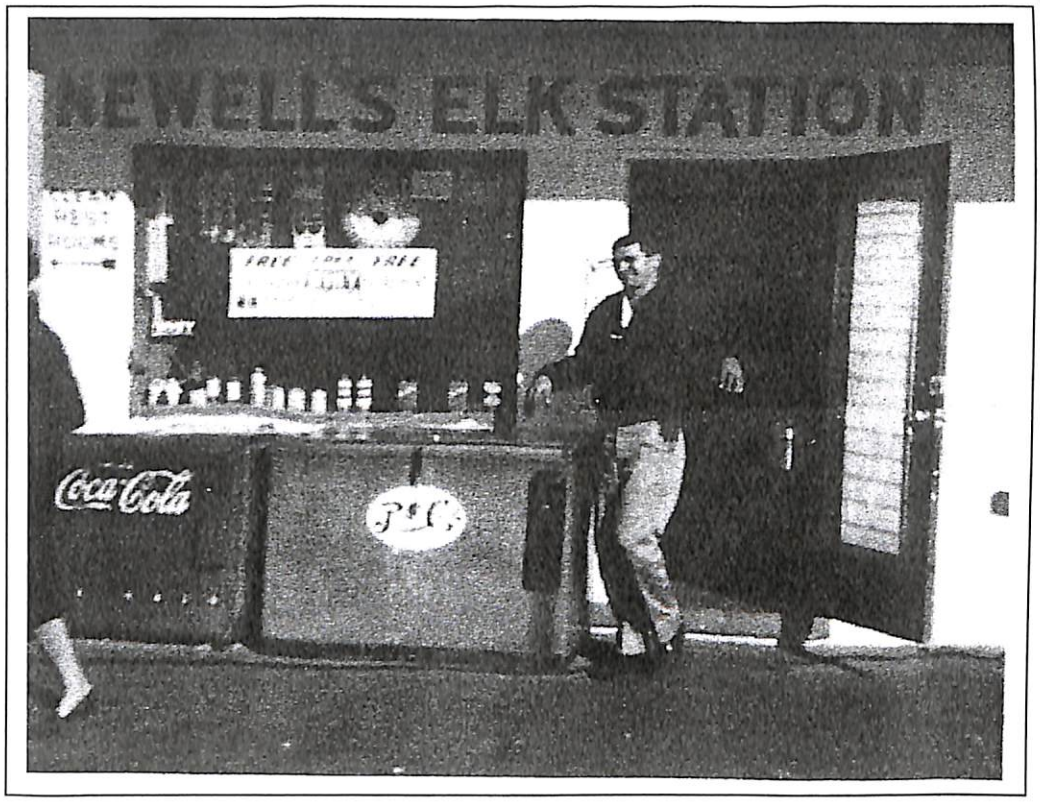


Photo of Bob Newell at his Station in Altamonte Springs, FL (History of Altamonte Springs p 182).

Bob Newell responded to our last newsletter with an interesting story and a correction….

"***Robert Newell's Lawn Mower and Hurricane Donna.***

"The normal course of events was interrupted in 1960 by Hurricane Donna which did extensive damage and it was several days before electricity was restored to a large area of Central Florida.

"Robert Newell had moved to Altamonte Springs from Massachusetts earlier that year and opened an independent service station (Newell's Elk Station) on S. R. 436 just east of town. Newell had been unhappy with himself for bringing all the way to Florida a reel-type lawn mower which was unsuited to his Florida lawn. But, with the power outage following the September hurricane, he remembered that the mower had a top-mounted engine.

"Turning his mistake into opportunity, he connected the lawn mower engine to his gasoline pump, making fuel available to desperate area drivers. Word of the ingenious system was picked by the local radio stations and Newell was busy supplying gasoline to long lines of motorists until electricity was restored. Newell's station remained a landmark in Altamonte Springs until it was closed in 1988" (article reprinted from the History of Altamonte Springs p 182).

And of course the editor apologizes for incorrectly listing his lineage. Bob's sister-in-law was visiting from Williamsburg, MA and caught our mistake. His parents were Stanley Rudolphus and Grace Annette (Kachler) Newell of Springfield, MA. His Newell grandparents were Herbert Clinton Newell and Florence May Taft. Herbert Clinton Newell was the son of Timothy Wolcott Newell (David Lawson & Caroline (Crawford), Ingoldsby Work & Rhoda (Taft) Crawford, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, Robert Taft). Florence May Taft was the daughter of Rodolphus A (George Washington, Moses, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

In Memoriam

George B. Fillian

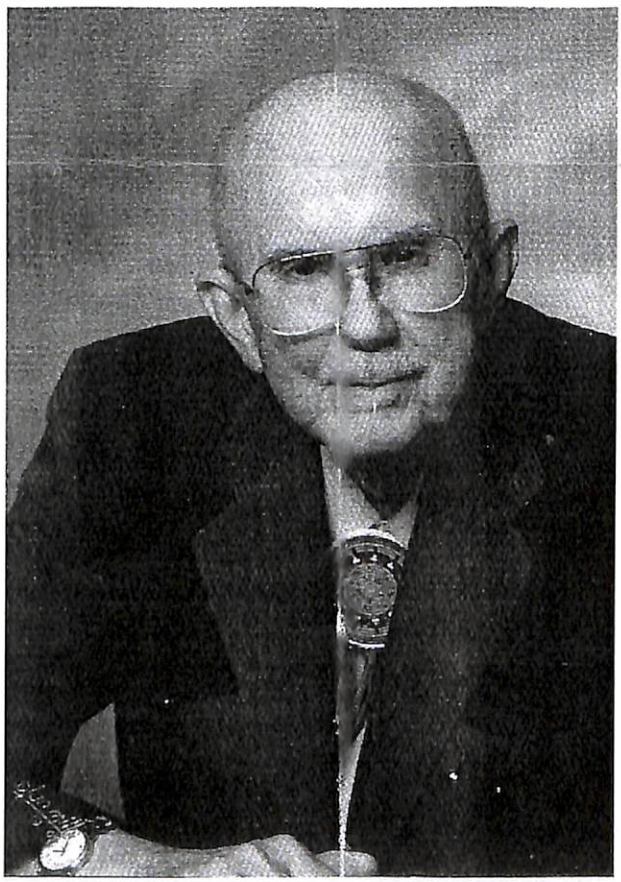
Our treasurer, Berneta, sent on the memorial service notice from Grace United Methodist Church. She mentioned that George Fillian of Yuma, AZ had called her a while ago and they had a most interesting conversation about his involvement with an Indian tribe (undoubtedly the St. Labre Indian School in NM which was listed in his memorial notice).

George B. Fillian, 79, of Ames, IA died 29 Aug 2007. He was born 29 Sep 1927 in Haverhill, NH to William J. and Beatrice L. (Buckley) Fillian.

George attended New York State Ranger School and served in WWII with the US Army Air Corp and the US Air Force during the Korean conflict.

On 7 Aug 1948 he was united in marriage to Annette Bushelman. She preceded him in death on 9 Jul 2005.

George worked as a Ground Crew Manager for Eastern Airlines and retired in 1965. He was a Claims Representative for Social Security and retired in 1986.



George was a lifetime member of the following: New York State Ranger School Alumni Association; D.C. Society Sons of the American Revolution, Kiwanis International, Piscataqua Pioneers, Ray County Historical Society (MO), American Legion Post #20, NARFE and Eastern Airlines Retirees Association, and Grace United Methodist Church in Story City, IA. He was a Hospice volunteer, and had served on many charitable Boards, Foundations and Community Clubs throughout his life whose main emphasis was the care of children and young people. He loved to travel and visit and enjoyed genealogy.

Survivors include two sons: Frank (Fran) Fillian of Yuma, AZ and Lee (Debbie) Fillian of Creston, IA; four daughters: Beatrice (Leon) Hobbs of Claremont, NH, Suzanne (Daryl) Mendel of Ramona, CA, Alice (Brian) Tibben of Nevada, IA, and Christina Potter of Marshalltown, IA.

His parents, wife and one great grandson, Nathaniel Hobbs, preceded George in death.

William J. Fillian/Fillion's parents were born in Canada. Beatrice L Buckley was the daughter of George J. & Emma L. Buckley; Emma L.was the daughter of Louis and Annie D. Cass. At this moment we are unaware of the rest of George's lineage and how he connects with the Taft family.

Please note that if your label reads 2000-2002, you will no longer receive this newsletter. Please contact our treasurer right away, so you don't miss the next newsletter this fall.

Brief notes from our members:

Marilyn Farwell Thygeson

Marilyn Farwell Thygeson wrote to tell us she enjoys the stories in the newsletter- adding personalities to names particularly pleases her. We're glad you enjoy reading the articles.

She says "the Tafts entered my family tree when Clarissa Caroline Follansbee (Clarissa, Israel, Jacob, Israel, Robert Jr, Robert Taft) married my gt-gt-grandfather, Capt. James Farwell, on 26 May 1826 in Watertown, NY.

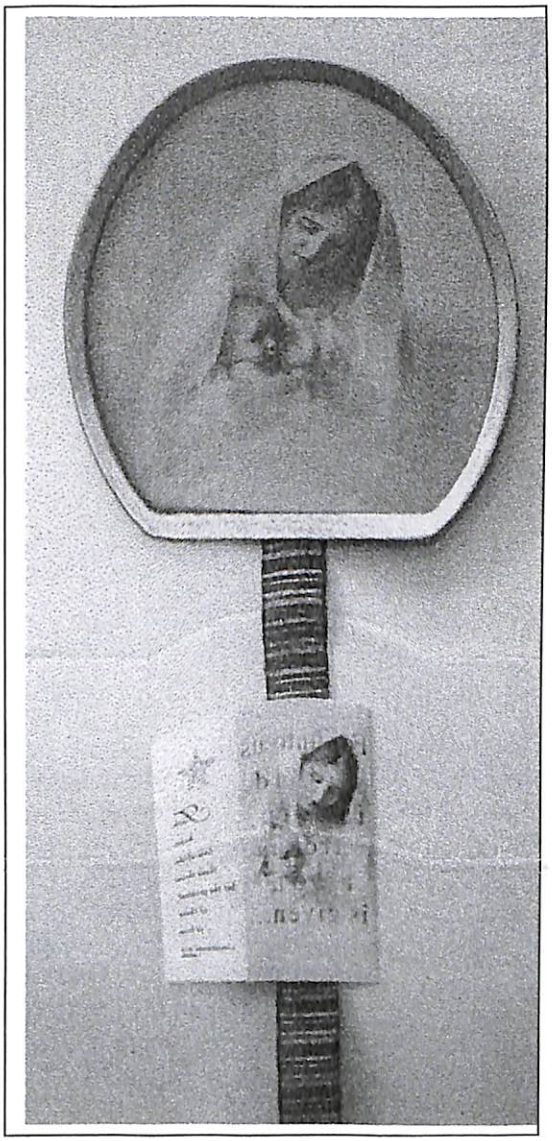
Phyllis Taft Potter

Phyllis Taft Potter of Westfield, PA was reminded of her own photo of the Taftsville, VT bridge – and noted the many changes made since her photo was taken. Phyllis is the sister of Louise Taft Plumley of Coudersport, PA.

Speaking of the Taftsville, VT bridge: the cover photo of bridge credit missed the name of the photographer: Jeff Turner.

Bertram T. Smith (aka our Daniel line historian)

Bert Smith let us know that he has moved to a retirement home about a mile from where they had lived for the last thirty years. He also sent a photo of the only two-dimensional work by his grandfather Lorado Taft, drawn in 1899. Lorado's daughter, Emily was born in April of that year, so he believes the wife and baby were models for the drawing at right.



Taft Naughtiness (to quote Neil)

Neil Todd sent us this item from the Cheshire Co, NH Justice of the Peace Records from the JOP Book of Reuben Alexander of Winchester, NH:

11 Feb 1805 Betsey Turner complained of bastardy against Moses Taft, he pleaded not guilty but was found guilty and ordered to appear at the next Court of Common Pleas, with Ephraim Taft and Levi Morry as his sureties. (No information available yet on that next appearance.)

Moses was either Moses born 2 Mar 1758 in Uxbridge, MA (VR 158), the brother of Ephraim b 14 Jul 1749 Uxbridge (VR 152), both sons of Silas and Mary Farnum; or Moses born 14 May 1795 in Charlotte, VT the son of the previous Moses. Silas died in Richmond, Cheshire, NH. Ephraim married as his second wife, "widow Sarah Taft of Swanzey" on 12 Mar 1807 also at Richmond. Moses Taft, the elder, was at Essex, VT for the 1790 census, although he had previously been at Richmond, NH where he married 13 Nov 1777 Anna Cook (death date unknown). They had 11 children between 1778 and 1795, most of whom were born in Vermont. If the next court record is found, it might clarify whether the father or the son was the naughty Taft. (Neil Todd data)

In Memoriam

Barrett Lorado Taft

Sarah Taft, the daughter of Barrett Lorado Taft, informed us of the passing of her father and noted that he had always been interested in the Taft family. Our sincerest sympathies go to their family.

Barrett Lorado Taft, 89, of Fern Park, a metallurgist and businessman, passed away on Tuesday, 29 Apr 2008. He was born in Orange, Connecticut on 26 Oct 1918. He was preceded in death by his wife of 56 years, Marjorie Park Taft. He is survived by his five children, Barrett Park Taft (Shirley) of Oak Harbor, WA, Bradford Scott Taft (Laura) of Orlando, FL, Elizabeth Taft Harris of Maitland, FL, Cyrus Winslow Taft (Julia) of Harriman, TN, Sarah Eddy Taft of Maitland, FL, six grandchildren, and his brother John Edson Taft (Nancy) of Brewster, MA.

Barrett grew up in New Haven, CT and graduated from MIT with a degree in metallurgy in 1940. He worked at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in Hartford, CT until he transferred to their new West Palm Beach, FL facility in 1958. In 1965 he moved to Maitland, FL and worked for Martin-Marietta. In 1967 he started his own metals business where he worked until he retired. While in the metals business he received a United States Patent for a lead casting technique without any waste (Apparatus for semi-automatic, high production die casting). He was a Life Member of the American Society for Metals.

Barrett was a dedicated family man who enjoyed playing bridge and working on do-it-yourself projects. He also was a lifelong member of the Republican Party.

Barrett Lorado Taft was the son of Edgar Whittaker (Judge Edgar Sidney, Bezaleel, Zadock Lovell, Nathan, Daniel, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

Our man on the web:

David W. Taft

If you have ever checked out our website, then you have seen the handiwork of Dave in updating many databases relating to our family. Currently there are databases including gedcom files, vital records, biographies, census records, on-line resources, military records, and family web sites. He is always receptive to more information.

Dave reports that he has recently transferred through his company, Siemens, to Georgia from Texas. His job was working as a Contract Manager. His new position is that of Compliance Officer reporting to Siemens Corp.

Congratulations, David, and enjoy your new surroundings.

Our members need not worry –
the website has not changed. It's still:

http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~taft/

Patent No 3,739,838

Apparatus for semi-automatic, high production die casting by the inventor Barrett Lorado Taft

Filing date: 4 Jun 1971
Issue date: 1 Jun 1973

Abstract:

"A semi-automatic high production die casting machine, involving use of a novel mold arrangement such that fishing sinkers, wheel weights or other such articles or components can be made on a rapid basis out of castable metal without any subsequent trimming or other work with respect to the finished articles or components being necessary."

The application includes several drawings and extended descriptions of the many-faceted item.

Taft Family Association Officers

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Annual dues of $8 per family are due and payable each year on or before June 1, 2006.
(Your dues are paid through the year on your mailing label.)